

WHAT IS BEST FOR THE STUDENTS?



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The best educational approach for any student is to have a stable environment for learning and developing social skills throughout their formative years. It is a parent's job to ensure that their child gets the best available education for their future.

To accomplish this goal, we feel that it is necessary that GBCHI on-site campuses (PPCD – 12th Grade) all be located in CCISD in a feeder school system. Currently, students from 2nd to 8th grade are benefiting from this structure. It would only need to be expanded to include High School, PPCD, Kindergarten and 1st grade.

Reasons change is needed:

- **Discrimination and Least Restrictive Environment**

Having GBCHI students to attend 3 different school districts is a form of discrimination for students with a hearing impairment. There are no other special educational or gifted-n-talented programs that are set up to have students to attend 3 different school districts because this is not creating a least restrictive educational environment. GBCHI families are feeling like they are taking less than the children deserve just to have access to the deaf education professionals to ensure success for their children. Other parents are not placed in that situation.

- **Gaps in Education**

Any educator will report that a student that is frequently moved to different school districts will create gaps in their education. This is for any student; regular, gifted and talented or special education.

- **To Be Like Everyone Else**

Being in one district provides the students the ability to be like all the other students in school by having the opportunity to

- a) make long-term friendships
- b) have continuity in academic and extracurricular programs
- c) develop a stable emotional foundation to help in coping with challenging life events

- **Philosophies, Resources, and Technology Have Drastically Changed**

GBCHI was developed 31 years ago due to the voices of parents of children with hearing impairments. The first board created what was at that time the best model program for students. The philosophy, resources, and technology in deaf education have drastically changed in those same 31 years. However very little change has occurred in GBCHI and change is long over due.



- **Fostering a Sense of Community**

Parents will feel ownership of their child's school programs and be willing to be involved at the individual campus knowing that their time and efforts will benefit current and future GBCHI students. Why be committed if there is no feeling that GBCHI is stable in staying in one place.

Having the program in one district centralizes the school functions which pulls families together. Most student families are pulled together by school clubs, sports, church, and community organizations. The only opportunity for GBCHI families to be brought together is for school events because we come from 10 communities. Having a 3 district program only further splinters a population already separated by distance.

- **Streamlining GBCHI Resources**

Being in one district is a more efficient use of the GBCHI resources, budget and staff. Shared professionals such as speech therapists, and interpreters will have more student contact time because less time is spent traveling because all the campuses are closer to each other.

Professional training and development sessions are a challenge to schedule due to the differences in the 3 school district calendars. This requires that sessions must be done 2 or 3 times to offer it to everyone or teachers are out of their classroom necessitating substitute teachers. This is added cost to pay for outside trainers to do multiple days of sessions or to pay for substitute teachers. The teachers within GBCHI have rare moments to meet as an entire program to network together and share information to assist each other.

- **Calendar Conflicts**

Since GBCHI crosses 3 districts, this results in 3 calendars for families with more than one student. A family can have different days off for each child which is a challenge for child care and often causes parents to have to take additional days off work. Being in one district provides one calendar for families with multiple students. It also gives the option for families to move into the district so that the GBCHI and regular education child are working with the same school calendar.



Reasons for CCISD:

- There are currently 49 students attending the onsite campuses for GBCHI. 30 of those students are attending CCISD campuses, which only leaves 10 students in Santa Fe and 9 students in Alvin. Fewer students would have to move to accomplish this goal.
- Based on a 2005-2006 survey, the other programs in Texas using a one district format are all using their fiscal agent school district to house the program.

Fiscal Agent for RDSPD	Feeder School System		Districts Served	Students		
	Yes	No Itinerant Only		Onsite	Itinerant	Total
Aldine	X		5			
Arlington	X		1	40	0	40
Birdville	X		6	50	0	50
Bryan	X		28	83	0	83
Corsicana	X					
Denton	X		26	63	75	138
Fort Bend		X	12	105	53	158
Humble			X	1	0	10
Irving	X		3	53	24	77
Laredo	X		4	37	33	70
McAllen	X		19	113	138	251
Mt. Pleasant	X		20	50	37	87
Sherman		X	14	2	22	24
Texarkana	X		11	16	1	17
Uvalde	X		16			
Waxahachie			X	3 counties	0	8
CCISD (GBCHI)		X	10	52	63	115

Figure 4: 2005-2006 RDSPD Survey Summary

- One third of the students currently are living in CCISD (See *Figure 2*).
- According to TEA, CCISD is the record holder for large school districts to receive the “Recognized” rating 9 out of the 10 years since it went into effect in 1995.



The challenges to be faced:

- **Overcrowding**

We realize that overcrowding is an issue for every school district. However, GBCHI presence at a campus is not the sole cause of the overcrowding and removing the GBCHI students from a campus will not solve the overcrowding problem.

- **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**

We realize that increasing the special education student numbers at one campus can cause concern in regards to the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report for a campus. However, the GBCHI teachers and staff are doing an exemplarily job in achieving the individual student goals for their standardized testing scores. The AYP report should never be a factor when considering GBCHI for a particular campus. This does not put the student's needs first.

- **Cost of Special Education**

The cost for a special education for a student is high, but districts are given federal/state money to assist with the added costs to provide the additional services. We realize that any good district will strive to provide the very best and that additional money usually does not cover it all. Other RDSPD have found ways to make it work and GBCHI can as well. You can not put a cost on the outcome of a graduate and their contribution to our society as an adult; it is priceless.